

Claims

1. A strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065).

2. The strain of lactic acid bacteria according to claim 1 which is *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064).

10 3. The strain of lactic acid bacteria according to claim 1 which is *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065).

4. A composition comprising the strain of lactic acid bacteria of claim 1 and an edible carrier or a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent, the composition being capable of stimulating mucosal immunity.

5. The composition according to claim 4 which is in the form of a food or beverage.

6. The composition according to claim 5 which is a fermented milk, lactic acid bacteria beverage, fermented vegetable beverage, fermented fruit beverage, or fermented soymilk beverage.

7. A method of stimulating mucosal immunity in a human subject in need of such stimulation comprising administering to said human subject the lactic acid

bacteria of any one of claims 1 to 3.

8. A method of stimulating mucosal immunity in a human subject in need of such stimulation comprising administering to said human subject the composition of any
5 one of claims 4 to 6.

9. A method of promoting IgA production in a human subject in need of such IgA production promoting treatment comprising administering to said human subject the lactic acid bacteria of any one of claims 1 to 3.

10 10. A method of promoting IgA production in a human subject in need of such IgA production promoting treatment comprising administering to said human subject the composition of any one of claims 4 to 6.

11. Use of the lactic acid bacteria of any one
15 of claims 1 to 3 for human mucosal immunostimulation.

12. Use of the composition of any one of claims 4 to 6 for human mucosal immunostimulation.

13. Use of the lactic acid bacteria of any one of claims 1 to 3 for promoting human IgA production.

20 14. Use of the composition of any one of claims 4 to 6 for promoting human IgA production.

15. Use of the lactic acid bacteria of any one of claim 1 to 3 for preparing the composition of any one of claims 4 to 6.